



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2008

FACT SHEET

**MAYOR SANDERS OFFERS UPDATE ON CITY'S
WILDFIRE RECOVERY PROGRESS**

*17 Building Permits Issued; 1,600 Tons of Fire Debris Cleared and Taken
To Miramar Landfill; 7,000 Clients Seen At Local Assistance Center*

At a news conference this morning, Mayor Jerry Sanders offered an update on the City's wildfire recovery progress, detailing the accomplishments of various City departments in the areas of development services, customer service, erosion control, and debris removal.

The mayor also took the opportunity to draw attention to the plight of some residents who are being denied fair treatment by their insurance providers as they attempt to rebuild their homes. Earlier this week Sanders sent a letter to State Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner on behalf of San Diego residents that are being denied fair treatment by their insurance providers. (*See attached letter.*) In the letter, the Mayor asked Commissioner Poizner to help ensure that homeowners are not taken advantage of by their insurance companies.

INSURANCE ISSUES

- Numerous families who suffered losses during the fires are encountering difficulties reaching settlements with insurers.
- In some cases, homeowners are being offered as little as 70% of their home's value despite purchasing contracts promising to provide insurance with 100% coverage.
- Certain members of the insurance industry may be unfairly trying to reduce their own liability at the expense of San Diego homeowners.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ASSISTANCE

- The City continues to make sure the process of rebuilding homes is handled quickly and efficiently.
- The City began offering permitting assistance on the first day the City opened the Local Assistance Center—before the fires had finished burning.
- Approximately 4,000 customer contacts regarding the permitting process for rebuilding.
- Expedited plan review offered cutting the building code review process down to less than 10 days.
- Inspectors made available at key points during construction, leading to speedy approval for final occupancy permits.

As of today:

- 17 building permits have been issued for single-family homes
- 31 sets of building plans for other single-family homes have been submitted and are in the review process
- 47 permits have been issued for repairs to fire-damaged homes
- 5 permits have been issued for accessory structures, such as a backyard deck, a retaining wall, or patio
- Building plans for one multi-family apartment complex have also been submitted and this project is in the review stage.

LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

- As part of the recovery efforts, the City opened a Local Assistance Center at the Glassman Recreation Center in Rancho Bernardo once the fires were under control.
- The Center provided a one-stop location for fire survivors to obtain critical information and services from 37 local, state, federal agencies, nonprofit and volunteer organizations. (*See attached summary.*)
- It served more than 7,000 clients during approximately 13,500 visits during its operation.

- Six City departments (Development Services, Environmental Services, Water, Metropolitan Wastewater, Police Department Crisis Intervention, and Fire-Rescue) provided direct services to fire survivors including:
 - building permit guidance
 - plan checks
 - debris removal services
 - vouchers
 - closing water and sewer bill accounts
 - emotional support
 - physical attention

EROSION CONTROL

- In addition to the direct services, the Local Assistance Center was an important pick-up location for erosion control materials as this year's rains began.
- To help prevent erosion in fire damaged areas, the City provided more than:
 - 15,000 sand bags
 - 5,800 fiber rolls
 - 7,400 bags of gravel
- Additional emergency erosion control efforts were undertaken by City staff.
- Hydroseeding is expected to begin in early March to help restore the hillsides and other natural areas of City property destroyed in the fires.

DEBRIS CLEAN UP

- The City also initiated a comprehensive debris clean-up program to maintain a rapid recovery process.
- **353 single-family homes required complete debris removal.**
- The City provided assistance to these homeowners by providing:
 - debris disposal vouchers to 193 recipients
 - complete debris clean-up services for 112 home sites
 - reimbursements for debris clean-up efforts to 29 homeowners
- As of today, the City has provided reimbursement for more than 1,600 tons of fire debris disposed at the Miramar Landfill.
- Residents have used vouchers for over 15,500 tons of additional debris disposal.

- The City clean-up program has removed and recycled:
 - 260 tons of metals
 - 12,700 tons of concrete
 - 1,780 tons of construction and demolition waste
 - more than 1,200 tons of landscape waste.

PENDING TAX CREDIT LEGISLATION

Mayor Sanders also announced that he has asked for—and Assemblymember George Plescia has graciously agreed to sponsor—legislation that will offer taxpayers tax credits of up to 15% of the cost of the purchase and installation of any wildfire risk reduction improvements.

- The credits will be good for work done between January 1, 2009, and through January 1, 2013.
- This work might include replacement of less fire-resistive materials with fire-resistive or noncombustible roofing material.
- It could include:
 - new siding or walls
 - decking materials
 - windows
 - improvements that create boxed eaves, louvered attic vents and other modifications that reduce or remove the opportunity for windblown embers to penetrate into vulnerable areas of a structure.